

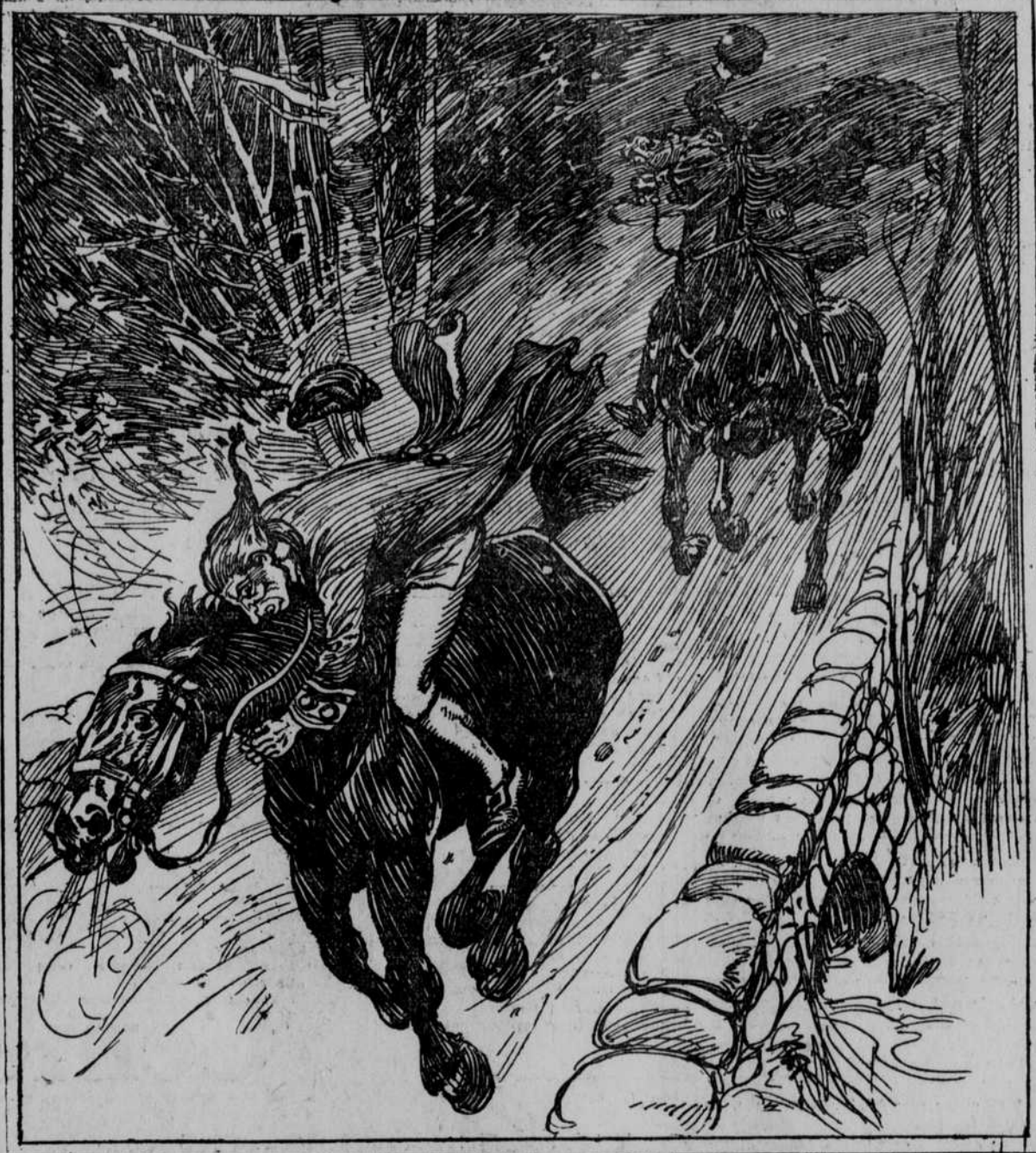
# THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

BY WASHINGTON IRVING

1783 - 1859

A CLASSIC  
IN A PAGE

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He Heard the Black Steed of the Ghost Panting and Blowing Close to Him.

Next to Rip Van Winkle "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" is probably the best known of Irving's short stories. The legend, like the history of the immortal Rip, was set forth by the author as having been found among the papers of a worthy old gentleman, Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker; which old gentleman was to Irving what Jonathan Oldbuck was to Scott. In the legend the quiet humor of Irving overflows into every detail of the story and there also is exemplified his wonderful power of bringing before people far removed by race, relations, traditions and time graphic views of the social state which existed in the Hudson in the era just before the Revolution. So graphically does he picture the life and character of the old Knickerbocker that even an educated man, having read "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," would feel at home in the Hudson in the era just before the Revolution. So graphically does he picture the life and character of the old Knickerbocker that even an educated man, having read "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," would feel at home in the Hudson in the era just before the Revolution.

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he had visited the paternal roof and beheld the prosperity of old Baltus Van Tassel, the father of the dream.

The stronghold of old Baltus was situated on the banks of the river in one of those green and sheltered nooks of which the old Dutch farmers were so fond. A great elm tree spread its shade over the roof and at the foot of the tree a spring of the purest and softest water bubbled up in a well made of a barrel sunk in the earth, and then stole sparkling away through the grass to a neighboring brook that ran below the river beyond. Within everything was snug, happy and well conditioned.

Farmer Baltus piqued himself upon the hearty abundance rather than the style in which he lived. From the great farm near the farm house the sound of the falls came from morning to night, and the great structure was fairly bursting with the treasures of the farm. Fleets of ducks and squadrons of geese floated upon the surface of a neighboring pond, while regiments of turkeys and small armies of hens and guinea fowl meandered about the barnyard. Then there were fat porkers and everything else that can be imagined to make the mouth of Ichabod Crane water as he thought of the possibilities of winter fare which they set forth by their presence. As he cast his eyes over the meadows and fields and orchards and saw the abundance thereof, the heart of Ichabod yearned toward the comely dame who was to inherit all this, and he even went so far as to calculate how these fair possessions might be turned into cash and invested in immense tracts of land and shingle palaces in the western wilderness.

The schoolmaster determined to win the prize, but in this undertaking he found that he had more real difficulties to encounter than generally fell to the lot of a knight-errant of yore, who seldom had anything except fiery dragons, giants, sorcerers and such like easy adversaries to encounter and only had to make his way through gates of brass and walls of adamant to the castle keep where his lady was confined; all of which he achieved as easily as a man would carve his way to the very center of a Christmas pie. Then the lady gave him her hand as a matter of course.

But poor Ichabod had to win his way to the heart of a coquette through a labyrinth of whims and caprices and to encounter a host of real flesh and blood adversaries in the shape of the lusty farm lads of the neighborhood, Katrina's admirers, who beset every portal to her heart and, keeping a jealous and watchful eye upon each other, were ready to fly out in common cause against any new aspirant. Among these was a veritable giant to be overcome, one Abraham or "Brom" Van Brunt, a great, hulking, double-jointed fellow with curly black hair, blue but not unpleasant countenance, overbearing and ready to fight at the drop of the hat, but good natured and vagabond withal, who was a sort of leader among the young men of the region as were inclined to frolic or adventure. He had two or three boon companions with whom he used to scour the country, attending every scene of feud, or merrymaking for miles around. Sometimes his crew would be heard dashing along the road past the farm house at midnight, yelling like a band of Cossacks, and the farmers, as they turned in bed, would say: "There goes Brom Bones and his gang." His great frame had given him the name of "Brom." He was looked upon with a mixture of awe, admiration and good will and when any madcap prank or

rustic brawl occurred in the vicinity the neighbors always shook their heads and said: "I warrant Brom Bones is at the bottom of it."

And this rattlepate hero had set his eyes upon Katrina Van Tassel! He was, indeed, a giant in the path not only of the schoolmaster, but of all the other youthful adventurers who sought the stronghold of the damsel's heart. When the other youths saw the horse of Brom Bones hitched to the fence in front of Farmer Van Tassel's house they wisely rode on. The signal that Brom Bones was sparking was enough to keep his rivals away.

How women's hearts are wooed and won is a mystery to old bachelors—matters of riddle and admiration. Some women seem to have to their hearts but one point of door of access, while others have a thousand. It is a great triumph of skill to gain the former, but a greater proof of generalship to overcome the latter; for a man must battle for possession at every door and window. He who wins a common female heart is entitled to renown, but he who makes conquest of the heart of a coquette and keeps his sway is, indeed, a hero. Now, let those explain it who can, but it is a fact that from the time Ichabod Crane began to pay his addresses to the plump Katrina the influence of Brom Bones visibly decreased. His horse was no longer seen tied to the fence on Sunday nights, and a deadly feud gradually grew up between him and the pedagogue of Sleepy Hollow.

Brom, of course, would have liked to fight the matter out after the manner of the knights of old—that is, in single combat—but the schoolmaster was too conscious of the superior strength of his rival to give him an opportunity of picking a quarrel. There was something particularly exasperating in this obstinate pacific system of Ichabod's, and Brom Bones, although he had boasted that he would "double the schoolmaster up and lay him on a shelf in his own school house," was reduced to playing boorish practical jokes upon him. Bones and his gang harried his hitherto peaceful domains. They smoked out his singing school by stopping up the chimney, broke into the school house at night and turned everything topsy-turvy, so that Ichabod began to think that all the witches in the country held nocturnal meetings there. Worse than all, Bones took every opportunity of ridiculing Ichabod in the presence of the fair Katrina, and had a scoundrel dog which he taught to whine in a most ludicrous manner, and introduced to the heiress as a substitute for the schoolmaster as an instructor in palmody.

Matters went on in this manner for some time without producing any perceptible difference in the relations of the three parties; Ichabod, Brom and Katrina. The schoolmaster clearly had the best of the situation as it stood. One day, as Ichabod sat majestically on his stool of authority in the little school house, a messenger rode up and announced to him that there was to be a "quitting frolic" that evening at Mynheer Van Tassel's and his presence was desired. At once all was bustle in the drowsy schoolroom. The schoolmaster, by the help of the birch, accelerated with such energy that school was dismissed an hour earlier than usual and the young lads burst forth yelling and racketing about the green in joy at their early dismissal.

The gallant Ichabod spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and refurbishing his best, and in fact only, suit of rusty black and arranging his locks by a bit of broken mirror that hung in the schoolhouse. Then, that he might make his appearance before his mistress like a true knight, he borrowed a horse of the choicest old Dutchman with whom he happened

to be domiciled, one Hans Van Ripper, and sallied forth in quest of love and adventure. The animal which Ichabod bestrode was a broken down plough horse that had outlived everything except his viciousness. He was gaunt and shaggy; he was ewe-necked and his head was like a hammer. One eye had lost its pupil and glared spectrally. But the other eye had the gleam of the devil in it. He must have been a steed of mettle in his day, for his name was Gunpowder. Ichabod rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle and his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers. He carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like a sceptre, and as his horse jogged on the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. The skirts of his black coat fluttered back almost to the horse's tail and on his head the learned man wore a small wooden cap, which seemed to rest upon the top of his nose.

It was a fine autumnal day, the sky was clear and serene and nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance, when the apparition described went shambling on its way toward the fertile and smiling country toward the castle of Mynheer Van Tassel. An early frost had painted many of the trees with those bright colors of orange, purple and scarlet which make the woods of the dying year so beautiful, while high in the air flocks of wild ducks went winging their southward way and the bark of the squirrel might be heard from the groves of clustering beech and hickory trees. Flocks of birds chattered and sang along the road and all nature seemed to be in keeping with the tender emotions and anticipations of plenty which filled the heart of Ichabod.

As the schoolmaster wended his way along the side of a range of hills which commanded one of the finest views of the Hudson the sun wheeled its golden disc down into the west and the broad waters of the Tappan Zee lay motionless and glossy, with here and there a lottering sail upon its glassy surfaces as some sloop dropped down with the tide toward the distant city of Manhattan. The loneliness of the twilight scene did not fail to awaken in the breast of the schoolmaster some apprehension of witches and other hobgoblins who, as is well known, are so fond of disporting themselves in the gloaming as well as in the "witching hours" later in the night. The shades of evening were closing down when Ichabod alighted at the gate of Farmer Van Tassel without having encountered witch or warlock, and, indeed, it would have been a brave hobgoblin that would not have fled before the sight of Ichabod perched upon his bony steed flapping and joggling across the landscape.

The worthy schoolmaster found the house filled with the pride and flower of the adjacent countryside. The leather-faced farmers, with their homespun coats and breeches, blue stockings, huge shoes and gorgeous pewter buckles; their brisk, withered little dames in close-crimped caps, long-waisted short gowns, homespun petticoats and scissors, pinchons and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside. And also, and more and most important, the buxom lasses, plump and pleasant to look upon! And the stalwart sons were there in square-skirted coats, their hair done in queues, after the fashion of the times. Brom Bones was there, of course, and had come riding up to the gate upon his favorite steed Daredevil, a creature, like himself, full of life and mischief. No one but himself could manage Brom Bones' fiery steed. Ample as the charms of the buxom lasses were those of the well-filled table,

with its heaped up platters of various sorts of cakes, known only to the experienced Dutch housewife. Then there were pies and pumpkin, peach and apple, besides hams and smoked beef, broiled shad and roasted chicken; bowls of milk and cream and the teapot sending up its incense of steam. It would take a volume just to mention the substantial delicacies which met the ravenous eyes of Ichabod as he entered the house and set to work to fill that insatiable and unfillable maw of his. Verily his lines had fallen in pleasant places!

The face of old Baltus Van Tassel, as he moved about among his guests, was as round and jolly as a harvest moon, and now the sound of music from the common room, or hall, summoned to the dance. Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his musical ability, and not St. Vitus himself could have gyrated with more jerks and jumps and writhings than did the schoolmaster when he entered the lists of Terpsichore. Katrina, the lady of his heart, was Ichabod's partner in the dance, and Brom Bones, sadly smitten by jealousy, sat brooding by himself in a corner. When the dance was ended Ichabod strolled where a knot of grave men were discussing, at one end of the piazza, the good old times and telling long-winded stories about the late war—that was waged by King George.

Just enough time had elapsed since the struggle to enable the narrators to dress up their tales in comfortable and attractive garb, and as the country where they now sat in peace and abundance had been harried by both sides, there was enough for them to talk about drawn from funds of more or less accurate personal remembrance. Of course, the legend of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow came up for discussion, and embellished as it was with authentic accounts of his having been encountered by well-known people only now a short time dead, the story was received with as much faith as if it had been written in the ordinances of the Selectmen. Brom Bones, who had strolled over also and was listening to the story of the Headless Horseman, declared that he had met him himself; in fact, had raced with him for a bowl of punch and won. But he did not get the punch, for when the Headless Hessian saw that Daredevil was outstripping his own steed he bolted at a flame of fire. Ichabod, on his part, told of many of the marvels set forth by his favorite author, Cotton Mather, and related several startling and ghastly adventures which had happened to himself in the state of Connecticut.

When the revels finally broke up and the farmers took to their waiting rooms Ichabod mounted his horse, prepared to see visions and dream dreams all the way home. He only lingered behind the rest for a moment to have a few words with Katrina, convinced that he was on the high road to success. What the coquette said to him nobody knows even unto this day. But as he issued forth from the interview with rather a desolate and chop-fallen air, probably he had not advanced as far toward the capture of the fortress as he had imagined. It was at the very witching hour of night that Ichabod pursued his way toward the house of Hans Van Ripper along the side of those great hills which here rise above the Hudson. In the dead hush of midnight he could hear the bark of a watchdog coming faintly from the further side of the river, and now and then some cock, accidentally awakened, or troubled in his conscience, would emit a long-drawn, ghostly sort of crow from some farm concealed in the night and the woods.

It was not a cheerful time nor a cheerful place for Ichabod. All the stories of ghosts and goblins which he had heard that afternoon came rushing back upon him and affected his nerves. He had never felt so lonely and so dismal. Moreover, he was now approaching the very place where many of the scenes of the ghost stories had been laid. To summon up his valiant courage Ichabod began to whistle. He thought his whistle was answered, and stopped short in terror. A great tree, guarded and knotted and lightning riven, stood before him. He heard what he thought was a groan and his teeth chattered in his fear. But the sound was only that of two limbs rubbed together by the wind of night. He started up his steed and passed the tree in safety, but not ten yards before him. About two hundred yards beyond the tree a small brook crossed the road under a little bridge. On either side the bridge was shadowed by trees so that the passage was wrapped in the deepest gloom.

Calling up all his resolution, Ichabod gave sundry kicks to his horse's sides and attempted to dash briskly across the pass of fear. But old Gunpowder shied to one side and ran into the fence. When, with whip and heel, Ichabod tried to urge him toward the bridge the perverse animal bolted to the other side of the road and plunged into a thicket of brambles and alders. When the frightened schoolmaster had finally got the horse headed for the middle of the bridge Gunpowder stopped short with such a suddenness as almost threw Ichabod over his head. At the same minute there came the sound of a plashy tramp in the marsh at one side of the bridge, and in the dark shadow Ichabod beheld something huge, misshapen, black and towering. It stirred not, but seemed gathered in the gloom like some giant creature ready to spring. The hair of the affrighted pedagogue stood on end with terror. In stammering accents he demanded: "W-n-o are you?" Though he repeated his demand there was no answer.

Shutting his eyes and cowering the sides of Gunpowder, Ichabod broke forth into a pailm tone. The object of his terror put itself in motion and with scramble and bound was in the middle of the road. Ichabod opened his eyes to see standing there a horseman of huge proportions mounted on a coal black steed. It was dark, but Ichabod could see the outlines of the terrifying figure. It made no offer of molestation or of sociableness, but kept aloof on one side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness. Ichabod quickened his

steed with the idea of leaving his strange companion behind, but the stranger quickened his nose to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind. The stranger did the same. The schoolmaster attempted to resume his singing, but his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

On mounting a rising ground which brought the figure of his fellow traveler into the light, Ichabod was horror-struck. The strange horseman had no head! To add to the horror, what would have been the horseman's head was carried before him on the pommel of his saddle! Ichabod's terror rose to desperation, and showering kicks upon the sides of Gunpowder, away he went, the old horse starting off with the speed of his hot and fiery youth. After Ichabod came the Headless Horseman at full gallop. Away they went, pursuer and pursued, stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound, Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttering in the air as he bent over his horse's neck in the eagerness of his flight. They reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow, but Gunpowder, who seemed possessed of a demon, made an opposite turn and plunged down the hill to the left along the shaded road, now black in the night, which leads to the brook and the old church with its graveyard standing on the green knoll beyond.

Just as they got half way through the hollow saddle girths broke under Ichabod, and he felt his saddle slipping. He had just time to save himself by grasping Gunpowder's neck when the saddle slipped off, and he heard it tramped under foot by his ghostly pursuer. An opening in the trees cheered Ichabod with the thought that the church bridge was at hand. Then he saw the whitewashed walls of the church dimly showing under the trees beyond. He recollected that this was the place where the Headless Hessian usually disappeared. "If I can but reach that bridge," he thought, "I am safe." He heard the black steed of the ghost panting and blowing close to him and could fancy that he felt his hot breath! Another convulsive kick and old Gunpowder sprang upon the bridge. He thundered over the resounding planks; he gained the further shore. Ichabod cast a look behind him to see if his pursuer would vanish according to rule in a flash of fire and brimstone. He saw the goblin rise in his stirrups and in the very act of hurling his head at him. He endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a terrific crash; he tumbled headlong in the dust, and old Gunpowder, the black steed and the Headless Horseman passed like a whirlwind.

Next morning Gunpowder was found without his saddle and with his bridle over his head peacefully cropping the grass in his master's yard. They found the saddle trampled in the dirt and saw in the road marks of horses' feet, evidently going at a furious pace. Just beyond the bridge they found the hat of the schoolmaster and a shattered pumpkin. They searched the brook, but the body of the schoolmaster was not found. His disappearance was, of course, a sensation for some time, but as he was a bachelor and in nobody's debt they soon ceased troubling their heads about him and settled down to the conviction that he had been carried off by the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

It is true that a farmer who went down to New York some years after came back with the absurd story that Ichabod was still alive; that he had left the neighborhood partly through terror of the goblins and Hans Van Ripper, who, Sunday saddle he had brought to grief, and partly because of having been rejected by Katrina Van Tassel. Also, the farmer said, Ichabod had taught school, studied law, been admitted to the bar and was now a Justice of Ten Pound Court. Brom Bones, too, who conducted the fair Katrina to the altar soon after the disappearance of Ichabod, was observed to look mighty knowing when the story of the schoolmaster's mad midnight ride was told and to always laugh at the mention of the pumpkin. But the best judges in the matter maintain to this day that Ichabod Crane was carried away by the Headless Hessian and in view of this plain and unvarnished tale of the facts in the case who can doubt it? Why, if any there be who doubt, let them take a trip up the Hudson to the land made famous by this ghostly occurrence where, if they are lucky, they may hear of a drowsy summer evening the voice of the unfortunate pedagogue, chanting at a distance a melancholy psalm tune.

Next week's one-page classic will be "The Nibedungen-ene."

Hats Off, Girls!

From the Pittsburgh Gazette-Times.

"I most certainly think that flirting is natural and proper for young girls," said Dr. J. F. Edwards, major surgeon of the Fourteenth regiment, N. G. P., superintendent of the bureau of infectious diseases, recently. Dr. Edwards was discussing the theory of Prof. Joseph V. Breitwieser, a psychological expert of Columbia university, in regard to flirting and with whose opinion he unqualifiedly coincides.

As an expert himself on infection and contagion, and as a gallant soldier, Dr. Edwards should be an authority and a court of last resort on the propriety of flirting, an early symptom in some cases of lovelessness.

"Do you think flirting is a safety valve for young girls?" Dr. Edwards was asked. "Yes," undoubtedly, he replied. "It is only natural for a young girl to feel attracted toward a man. It is the natural instinct rising in us. The girl who does not primp when she sees a man, who does not adjust her stray locks and sees that her hat is on straight, and that she is looking her best, is certainly abnormal. Any ordinary girl is pleased to be admired by a man she has met under proper circumstances. The female bird preens its feathers to attract the male. The same instinct is in us. All animals feel a desire to display themselves at an advantage to the opposite sex."